What Will the World Say?

BY J. H. WORST.

"What will the world say?" No matter, do your duty. A good conscience is worth more than worldly applause. Christian duty often strikes the popular idea at right angles, and though the concussion strikes fire the sparks soon die out. Opposition whets the blade of every Christian's ardor and tempers his zeal for deathless victories. When the tide of priestly oppression was full, the hosts of God marched through its bitter waters with firmest tread. When the cloud is black and over us, we shall soon see it retreating with its bow of promise outlined upon its sable back as clear and beautiful as an angel's garment. The historic tablets of the world aver that duty leads to shining triumphs, but the victor seldom escapes the lion's teeth as he climbs toward duty's goal.

"What will the world say?" Do not let its chattering weaken your nerves. Whether it commends or jeers the course of duty, press on with firmer tread. The clatter and rattle and splash of social tattle will warn you out of danger as the roaring of the surf tells the mariner that danger lurks where the foam is wildest. The vortex of vice that whirls its victims into eternal slavery is the headlight that warns duty to flee to higher grounds. The enemy unwittingly becomes a danger signal to all wary enough to read its warning. The dissipations it offers in lieu of duty's task are but gilded doses of weakness for body and soul. A deaf ear to its wiles may make it frown, but every worldly frown is a voucher for duty's work well done. If the frown deepens into persecution, shun not its open warfare, but "press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Persecution is the harbinger of well-earned trophies and God's welcome plaudit, "well done."

"What will the world say?" It will say you are a crank, a demagogue, or a fool, and friends will shrink from you as flowers fade before the early frost; but challenge the world for its rarest bounty and its light goes out when the grave opens. Nothing in its vast panorama of gilded attractions but what ends with the busy whirl of life. Well may it jeer at the Christian whose hopes are based upon immortal rewards and deathless promises, for the paucity of its future outlook seeks to darken the hereafter by brightening the present. Jibe and error and wanton buffoonery hurled at duty's demands but prove the shallowness of a worldly mind. Its aggressiveness, its usurpation, and its motive is corruption. When duty has crowned its subjects with everlasting glory the mockers at virtue will be wailing the song to which their lives are attuned. The harvest will be sad but the sowing was vile and the reward must be as bitter as the seed was bad.

"What will the world say?" It will say, "eat drink, and be merry," and let the future take care of itself. It will say that wealth is the pedestal of honor, fame the goal of ambition, and fashion the acme of bliss. But when wealth and fame have toyed their laurels, and vanity and revelry have dissipated their victims, there comes a hollow voice from the throne, sepulchral and sad, saying, "What is all this worth?" Yes, from the heart of this world's throne, while the laughter and revelry still resounds and the fumes of intoxication still ascends, a still small voice from smothering conscience condemns it all. Intoxication weakens, gluttony does not strengthen, and revelry does not gratify. The sham-shaped oppositions offered as rewards for loyalty to folly, are but sugar-coated pellets of poison that paralyze soul and body, and pock and label their victims for the torments of hell. Disease and misery, ruin and sorrow flow from this throne as water from a fountain.

"What will the world say?" I don't care. If she can offer nothing better than groveling instincts, depraved appetites, abnormal propensities, and wholesale gluttony, her fulsome harangue is as meaningless as the howl of a wild beast and as harmless as a zephyr. The attractions of slander may win some, the follies of vanity may draw others, the allurements of vice and profligacy may be enjoyment to many, but a pure mind abhors each and all. Out of the carousal can come no clean thing, only sorrow and affliction. The bravest to sneer at duty and the most daring to plunge into iniquity prove arrant cowards when death beckons them aside to view the rewards of worldly living. View the picture as we may it is filled with nothingness for the future, and anguish for the present. It is the picture of a wasted life, a blasted hope, and a troubled soul. Eternal slavery is the price of its misnamed liberty and mistaken pleasures.

"What will the world say?" No matter. The time will come when its jibbing will cease and the great judge will close the volume. Those who walk in the light of duty and conscience will be ransomed and those that persecute will be condemned. The filth and scum of moral depravity will embosom their serfs as the quicksands embrace the careless traveler, and purity and cleanness will rise to their source and bless their lovers evermore.

The Christian Altar.

"We have an altar."—Heb. 13:10.

This statement is in the nature of an apology for the Christian's position. The temple to a pious Hebrew, was a sacred place, full of inspiring associations, and though Christianity brought great blessings to those who received it, it yet involved in one sense, something of loss by its abrogation of the temple service. The Apostle, however, wanted those to whom he wrote to understand that though the altar and priest of the temple had, for Christians passed away, they had in the more spiritual system of Christianity all that these expressed. "We have an altar." not the material one of the temple, but all the spiritual privileges and benefits the altar expressed.

1. The altar was the symbol of the Divine presence. The devout Hebrew was always sure that God would meet with him in the temple. But we have this in Christianity. All the essentials and benefits of worship are secured to us by Christ. At the Cross we are sure to meet God, and He is sure to bless us.

2. The altar was also the place of sacrifice. The Jew made his offering and went away satisfied that God accepted him. But even in this sense we, too, have an altar. Christ was once made a sin-offering for us, and accepting His offers, we may rest assured of the Divine favor and be at peace.

3. But at the Jewish altar offerings were made part of which was eaten by the worshipper. And so at our altar we, in a spiritual sense, feed upon Christ. At the Lord's table and in our ordinary services we are fed and strengthened.

4. In the Jewish Temple gifts were given at the altar, and so the divine right to human service was recognized. It is so at our altar. We bring our praise, our gifts, ourselves. The theory of the New Testament is that we are to live consecrated lives. We do not merely attend the temple now and again, and offer our gifts—we rather live in the temple—we are always in the divine presence—always engaged in His service. And so, though destitute of the outward splendor of the official priest, we still have in Christianity an altar—have all the essential features and privileges set forth by the temple service of the Jews.—SEL.

An Encouraging Word.

To illustrate the value of an encouraging word at the right time: There was a man named Bayley in England, who came into a temperance meeting to take the pledge. He was a light-weight champion, but was in terrible straits; he came with his coat buttoned up to his chin. He asked some one to unbutton his coat to see if he had any linen on, but they told him that didn't matter.

"Have you any home?"

"No."

"Where are you going to sleep to-night?"

"Where I did last night."

"Where's that?"

"In the street."

One gentleman looked at him a moment; he knew he was dirty and probably unfit to go into any decent house, but there was a chance to save a man, and he took him home with him, gave him a good bed, and took good care of him until morning. What if the lady did have to burn the bed in the morning, when she found it was *alive*? What is a bed compared to a man? He kept his pledge, and what to do now was the next question. He couldn't read nor write—had no education whatever, but he must do something. So he went and coolly applied to the Sunday school for a position.

"What position do you desire?"

"Oh, anything; I'd as leave be a teacher as anything else, if I could have the class I want."

"All right. What class do you want?"

"I prefer the infant class—the little ones that can just read."

And they gave it him. What in the world was he going to do with a class, when he didn't know his letters? Wait till you see. He gathered his little class together, and said:

"Now, boys, I want to commence right, and I'm going to find out how much you know." He took up one of the blocks of letters.

"Now, I'm going to ask you questions separately, and I will give the one that's most positive and right a little present. Now what letter is that?" he said, covering it with his hands so only one could see. "What letter is that?"

"A," said the little fellow.

"Are you sure now—positive of it? What letter is it, again?"

"A," stoutly said the boy, and then he showed it to another and asked the same questions, and then gave the presents. So he learned his letters and could shortly read. He kept on mastering every difficulty until there was no more useful man in all London. A word of encouragement, or kindly act of encouragement, and manifestation of confidence at the right moment, will frequently rescue a soul that God can use to reach others.—JOHN B. GOUGH.

Saved by a Caress.

"A kiss saved me!" Immediately every face bent forward. Richly, daintily-clad women and moneyed men filled the room; but the silence that followed that statement could be felt, so eager were they to catch every word.

Some one had spoken lightly of the trifles that so surely make up the sum of human happiness or woe. Trifles count for nothing, they thought; it is the great events that determine the destinies of men for good or ill. It was this that had drawn forth the statement and the explanation that followed.

"I know nothing," he continued, "of my parents or the circumstances of my birth. Nothing in all the bitter past clings so close to memory as the certainty that I belonged to nobody and nobody belonged to me. In one of our large cities, in a locality where there are many homeless ones, where baseness is the ruling element, I may or may not have had my birth—at least that was the first I knew of myself. Poverty isn't so hard if we have some one to love us: but no one cared for me, and all the days were alike, and the nights seemed an eternity of time. There is a bitterness of sorrow in the lives of the homeless of which God only can know.

"The snow had fallen, and the cold March winds were blowing, leaving us no choice, except the sunniest side of the dismal street in which we found shelter. I, with others whose years were few, and whose homes were anywhere, had sought the sunniest side, when a lady paused beside us, smoothed back my tangled locks and kissed me. That was the first caress I had known, and it saved me. I slept somewhere that night, and unlike all other nights that had preceded it, I was neither cold nor weary. The hand reached down to lift me up from the depths never unclasped its hold. Angels sang their sweetest songs through the long hours; the rapturous refrain echoes in my soul to-night. It was years before I grew out of that life to a better one; but whether I had where to lay my head, or had not, I knew no weariness. The warm glow of a perfect day lighted all the future, and in every dark hour I felt the presence of a light footfall, the soft touch of a hand.

Out of the pure depths of her pitying womanhood she kissed me. It was a trifling thing indeed, to kiss a homeless, friendless child; but because of that kiss, and with the Father's help, I stand to-day upon the firm basis of an honorable manhood."—SEL.